

Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 1-8 (**Cancelled**).

9. **(New)** A method of cooking food having animal protein as a main component, comprising:

 uniformly preheating by Joule heat an entirety of a foodstuff to a temperature of at least 50°C but less than 80°C by forming a liquid electrolyte film on the foodstuff, and passing electric current through the foodstuff via the liquid electrolyte film so that the denaturing of protein occurs in the entirety of the foodstuff; and

 freezing the thus preheated foodstuff without a pre-cooling step being performed between said preheating and said freezing.

10. **(New)** A method according to claim 9, wherein

 said preheating is carried out by transporting the foodstuff between a current-carrying portion of a heating device and an electrode portion of the heating device, feeding the liquid electrolyte onto the foodstuff to form a film of the liquid electrolyte on the foodstuff, and passing electric current through the foodstuff via the current-carrying portion and the electrode portion of the heating device.

11. **(New)** A method according to claim 10, wherein

 said transporting of the foodstuff comprises transporting the foodstuff on a conveyer.

12. **(New)** A method according to claim 11, wherein

 said feeding of the liquid electrolyte comprises storing the liquid electrolyte in a supply tank located above the conveyor, and dropping the liquid electrolyte onto the foodstuff as the foodstuff is transported by the conveyer.

13. **(New)** A method according to claim 12, wherein
said dropping of the liquid electrolyte onto the foodstuff comprises dropping the liquid electrolyte through slits formed in a lower part of the supply tank such that the liquid electrolyte flows along flexible brushes that hang from the supply tank and contact the foodstuff as the foodstuff is transported by the conveyer.
14. **(New)** A method according to claim 9, wherein
said freezing comprises freezing the foodstuff to a temperature of 18°C or below.